

[Mrs. M. J. Cannon]

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Folk Stuff - [?]

Phipps, [Woody?]

Rangelore

[Tarrant?] Co., [Dist.?] 7 [90?]

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[Mrs. M.J. Cannon?], 73, was born in Arkadelphia, Ark., on July, 30, 1864. Her father moved the family to Jewell, Eastland Co., Tex., on Sept, 15, 1864, where he established a 160 acre stock farm. She married M.F. Cannon when 15 1/2 Yrs. old, and they moved to Crosby Co., [Tex.?], where they established a 220 acre stock farm. They reared two boys who developed into cowboys, and a girl who married J.J. Wallace, who's father operated a ranch at Cisco, Tex. Her husband died in Slaton Texas, in 1918, and she now resides at the Masonic Home for the aged located 12 [Mi.?] [?] of Ft. Worth, Tex. Her story:

"Why, yes, I was raised in West Texas when it [was?] considered the sure enough wild and wooly [West?]. If I could [remember?] all the things that happened to me, You'd be able to write a big book on it all. [As?] it is though, my memory sort of fails me right when I want it to work but I'll tell you all I can recall. The most of what I tell you will be about the good times we had because that's about all I ever thought about when I was growing up and while I was young.

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"First, I was born on July the 30th, 1864, in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Just as soon's I was able to be carried good and my ma was able to take a long trip, my dad set out for Texas on September the 15, 1864. Dad's name was [Eldridge?] Nix and he settled on what was known as the 'Nix Place'. It was right outside Jewell Texas, in Eastland county, and had about 100 acres in it. I suppose you'd call the place a stock farm because he farmed on a small scale but he really worked cattle. That was his aim, to work up a cattle ranch. I don't recall whether he had a brand or not. I suppose he did have but I didn't pay any [attention?] to that.

Now, the reason I didn't pay any attention to anything in the way of business was because I was pure-de [spoilt?] when I was a kid. [C12 - 2/7/41- Texas?] 2 My mother died right after we got to Jewell, and my two sisters had the raising of me and all the household work too. They'd let me run loose after I got big enough to get away from the leash. You see, while I was too small to be depended on not to run off, they'd made a sort of harness that went around my shoulders and kept me tied to a wooden stake while they were in the dugout working.

"[When?] we first came to that country, there were no houses and everybody lived in dugouts that were made by digging a square hole about 10 by 10, then about seven feet deep and running a long pole across the middle, about two feet higher than the ground level, then slanting the tarpaulin down so to let the water run off when it rained.

"After we'd been there for about 18 months, dad had got together enough logs to have a house raising. Now, that's where the fun starts. I was too young to have any fun at this one but you can bet I didn't miss many of them after I got big enough to dance and talk up for myself. Everytime they'd have a house raising after that, I'd be there. You see, the women folks would cook enough stuff to last a good sized crowd of men for a couple of days, then they'd tell everybody that there was to be a house raising at so and so's place at so and so a time. Everybody knew they'd have a little dancing and eating thrown in with the work connected with raising the house, or rather, building the house so they'd be on hand to

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help. Sometimes there'd be as many as 50 men there with their families and they'd make short work of putting up the house. They figured the quicker they got the house up, the quicker they'd get to dance, drink, and eat. [C12 - Texas?] 3 I didn't care much for a drunk man because he just thought he could dance. He couldn't really dance as well then as he could when he was sober. There were lots of them that could sure enough dance, though.

"I don't really recall just when I did learn to dance because the cowhands taught me to jig when I was really small. I was dancing with men when I was going to school. I went to school in Jewell. Nothing much happened to me when I was going to school but let me tell you what happened to me once. Dad gave me a little old Indian pony to ride to and from school and I could really ride him. He was about the best pony I'd seen around those parts and he'd kick up on a frosty morning but I'd stay with him. He got in the habit of getting loose from the rail when I'd tie him up at the school. No matter how tight I'd tie him; he'd always get loose.

"One day, he'd gotten loose and had strayed farther away than usual. By the time I'd found him, it was getting dark. I don't guess I was over 100 feet from him when I found him but there were six old Texas Longhorn steers that found me at the same time. They's run at me, snort, then run back. [Was?] I worried? I'll say I was, but I kept behind trees and circling until I had the pony between me and the steers. I'd forgot my rope and it was still tied to the rail so I took my bonnet and put it around his neck, then led him back to the rail.

Since I always had to have somebody help me onto the pony and they were all gone, I didn't know how to get on him. I looked around for a stump but I couldn't see any and it was getting darker all the time. There was an old graveyard by the school and there were tombstones in it that I could stand on to get on him so I did it that way. You talk about scared. I was one scared kid until I got on his 4 back, then I made [him?] understand that speed was what I wanted. [?] were going [?] to nothing when I met my dad coming after me. He'd got worried about me and was coming to see what was the trouble. The only

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thing I liked about going to school was the spelling bees they'd have. [We'd?] have lots of fun then.

Now, back to the dances. The majority of them were square dances. After I'd got married and was a little older, I saw other kinds but I stuck to the good old square dancing. Been so long since I was to one of them that I don't recall the words they used in calling them but a good caller always tried to make up new ones so you might say they had no set form of calling.

I met my husband at one of these dances and we got married when I'd only met him about five times. You see, if you'd go a long ways, you could go to a dance about once a month but dad only took us about once every quarter so I really knew [M.F.?] over a year before we got married.

"Others that I recall metting were, [Dink?] [Logan?], a good rider with a pretty horse but I don't know whether I ever heard of his ability as a cowboy. I rated them according to how good they danced and Dink could dance real good. [?] met at all the dances.

"Another that I recall was Dan Clawson. Old Dan couldn't dance but he could trot to beat the band. [?], [Jim?] Thornton, he [?] a good dancer, and Steve and Temple Ellis. Let me [tell?] you one on [Temple?].

"One time, he and his dad were going to the brakes after wood. They were just using the running gears, you know, no wagon bed, and when they got on top of a pretty steep hill, his dad told him to get some ropes and tie the wheels to the gears so they wouldn't [roll?] and 5 that way, the wagon wouldn't run over the team. Temple says, 'Alright dad'. He stood on the tire and held the wheel to keep it from turning, then when they got half way down, he stepped off and let the wheels go. Well, the wagon like to have run over the hosses and was going like a prairie fire when they got to the bottom of the hill but Temple's dad handled them like a veteran and didn't have no trouble. Temple had to run real hard

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to catch up but when the [wagon?] was slowed down at the bottom, he caught up. His dad said, 'What happened, Temple? Did the ropes break?'

"Temple said, 'No, I just wanted to see if you could ride it as fast as it would go'.

"Now, that was kind of a rough joke but that's the way the cowboys joked. They lived a rough life and joked as rough [as?] you ever heard. Why, [?] tender foot that lit on a ranch would almost get killed before he got broke in to ranch life. The boys would lead him to one of their wildest horses and tell him it was tame, then let him get on the horse. The usual trick was to have the horse already saddled and ready to go before the poor fellow ever saw it.

"He'd come out from the chuck wagon or where ever he was hired, and all he'd see was [?] horse already saddled and he'd been told they'd give him a gentle one before he tried the rough ones and he'd just mount it without ever a suspicion anything was up. The first time he knew otherwise was after he getting the stormiest ride he'd ever had in his young life. The horse usually threw them after the first jump and the boys would be on hand to rescue him from anything else happening to him.

"When I married [?] Cannon, I was about 15 and a half years old. Cannon was a real man and wasn't afraid of old Nick himself so he put it up to me like this. He said, 'Now, we can live on your dad's place and take what he gives us, or we can strike out and build ourselves a place of our own if you've got the guts to stay with me.'

Well, I'd lived a life of ease. That is, my sisters took all the bumps and nothing ever happened around the home place so I thought that in getting married, I would have a home of my own, be my own boss, get up when I wanted to (I was a heavy sleeper and was hard to wake up), and just have things the way I wanted so I jumped at the chance of getting off that way.

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"To start with, M.F. had been keeping his eyes on me and had been saving his money right along so he was in a better position to get married than anybody else, including myself because I didn't even know very well how to cook. Dad gave us two teams of horses, and a brand new Studebaker wagon to carry our stuff in.

"The last I ever saw of my folks was after they threw a big dance as a farewell party for us, then we lit out. I won't ever be able to forget that trip. When we started out, we had good weather but we hadn't been long on the trail 'til a Blue Norther struck us. The second night out on the trail, we had to camp right out on the open prairie but we [weren't?] worried because we had good stock and the best wagon money could buy in those days.

"We went to bed that night and I went right off to sleep just like I always did when I was at home. I didn't know a thing 'til I woke up the next morning and M.F. told me what had happened. I'd slept through the worst wind storm that he'd ever seen and one that the old timers that came out in the [60's?] couldn't even beat. M.F. [said?] that the wind almost blew the wagon over so he got out and dug holes in front of each hole, then rolled the wagon forward and 7 off into the holes. This way, the wagon would be harder to turn over or move any way. I'd slept all through this and woke up the next morning after the wind had gone down and everything was calm and [peaceful?].

"About the third day on the trip, the wheels went to squeaking something awful and I was getting so disappointed. I thought we had been cheated on our pretty wagon with the pretty yellow wheels and red and green [trimming?] but I didn't say anything to M.F. about it. I just kept quiet. [When?] we got to a water hole, he watered the stock, then got a bucket and poured water on the wheels. He didn't seem satisfied with that so he dug some more holes and rolled the wagon off into them, then filled the holes with water. [?] the wagon stood in the water, he hunted for a pole and a block. With this, he used leverage, then had me to turn the wheels so another part would be in the water. He did this until he had the entire wheel all wet and [muddy?]. The next [morning?] after we started out, he explained

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that the wheels had gotten dry and drawn up, and that the water would swell the wheels back out to where they wouldn't squeak any more.

“Well, it seemed like years before we got to that section of [Texas?] known as, '[The Lano Estacado?]', or the staked plains. [?] settled in Crosby county on a 220 acre tract and M.F. branded his 60 head of cattle with the [MFC?] brand.

“I worked with the herd just like a man. Of course, I didn't ride a horse but I 'tended the cows that came fresh. I never will forgot one thing that happened to me while [?] was hunting one old cow's calf. You see, they'd hide their calves off where they figured you'd never find them which was dangerous because they never got the right treatment and lots of them would die [Well?], I'd followed this old 8 cow around for four days but she'd been giving me the slip. I finally let her get out of sight, then [followed?] her tracks through the sand. Now, there were still a few dangerous outlaws and rustlers in that country and I'd made a mountain out of a mole hill to where I looked for one to pop out anywhere. This condition [stayed?] in the back of my head all the time but I got my mind set on that old cow's tracks and was going right along when I went through some bushes and bumped right into her. She had her calf and was suckling it at the time but I thought an outlaw had me so I tore out, the cow and calf went in different directions and we all had a good scare. She didn't find her calf 'til 'way the next day because I heard her bawling 'til she found her calf.

“After we'd been on the place several years, we quit going to Crosbyton for rations and went to Amarillo twice a year for our grub. Contrary to the general notion, we didn't buy much stuff in barrels because a wagon would shake it to pieces. Barrels wasn't so good in those days either because they had wood ties instead of iron like they do nowadays. [Well?], we'd get about a dozen 100 pound sacks of flour, 100 pound sack of coffee, half a barrel of syrup, a barrel of sugar, six sides of bacon, four boxes of dried fruit, and a 100 pound sack of dried beans. [We?] had plenty of wild meat and grew our beef and farmed

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enough garden stuff to care for us and some other places too, so you see, we had plenty to eat any time we wanted it.

[We'd?] go to Crosbyton for the dances though. It was about 15 to 20 miles there and M.F. would pick up all the women on the way that wanted to go. They'd hold a barbecue and dance for two days and nights there besides having the best fiddler I ever heard. His name was 'Fiddler Bill', and he could just make up tunes that beat 9 anything these long haired guys that you pay to hear. Just a natural born fiddler. There were a good many of the cow punchers that could wield a [mean?] bow but they learnt it from somebody else. There were guitar players too, that could play right well. I don't recall any special names of places they played. I don't think most of them had a name. Of course, they played 'Arkansaw Traveler', 'Old Dan'l Turkey'. 'Turkey in de Straw', and other popular pieces along with the ones they made up.

"Now, about the cattle roundups and such, I went to several of the Fall roundups before M.F. quit and went to carpentering. I met [Jim?] [Williams?], who owned the 'SR' Ranch and throwed a barbecue and a dance right after a roundup one year. It was held in Hank Smith's rock house in Blanco Canyon and lasted about three days and nights.

"I remember when I went there, I saw thousands of cattle in the canyon. A little while after I got to the ranch house, I happened to be looking out the window and saw a wagon load of girls coming up the road. Now, they had to [pass?] over a ditch that had some goat heads in it. You see, Hank had barbecued goats and throwed the heads into this ditch. Well, they failed to see this ditch and when the wagon jolted over it, three of them fell over backwards into the ditch.

"The first thing they saw when they sat up was these bloody heads sticking straight up out of the ground. Of all the screaming that come off, a 100 catamounts couldn't make that much noise. One of the boys had fixed the heads in that way, hoping to pull off a stunt about like that.

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"I met another rancher there that run some cattle on about one section of land. His name was Jim [?] and he run the 'SD' Ranch. I recall another foreigner I met there but I can't recall 10 his name. He run the 'Z Bar L'. You make the brand like this, 'Z-L'. Then, there was J.J. Wallace who owned and operated the 'Triangle J' with about 100 head. You make his brand like this, . I also met several of the Swenson Ranch foremen but I don't recall their names. It was one of the big ranches owned by big Easterners who lived in New York. They'd write the range boss to spare no expense to show the boys a good time after the roundup. [?] all get together and it would [last?] two or three days.

'Well, I'm about to run out of soap. I forgot to say though, that my daughter married J.J. [Wallace's?] boy [and?] lived on the place which was finally located North of Cisco.

"One other thing is the men M.F. usually played with at the dances. One was old Thomp', Miller, he played the violin, and Al Patterson, who also played the violin while my husband picked the banjo. M.F. played for the dances and goings on 'til he died with the Flu in Slaton Texas, in [1918?].